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Imprimatur.

*C. Alston* R. P. D. *Hen.*  
Episc. Lond. à sacris  
Domesticis.

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THE  
**First Fruits**  
OF  
**REASON:**  
OR, A  
**DISCOURSE**

Shewing  
The Necessity of applying our  
selves betimes to the serious  
Practice of Religion.

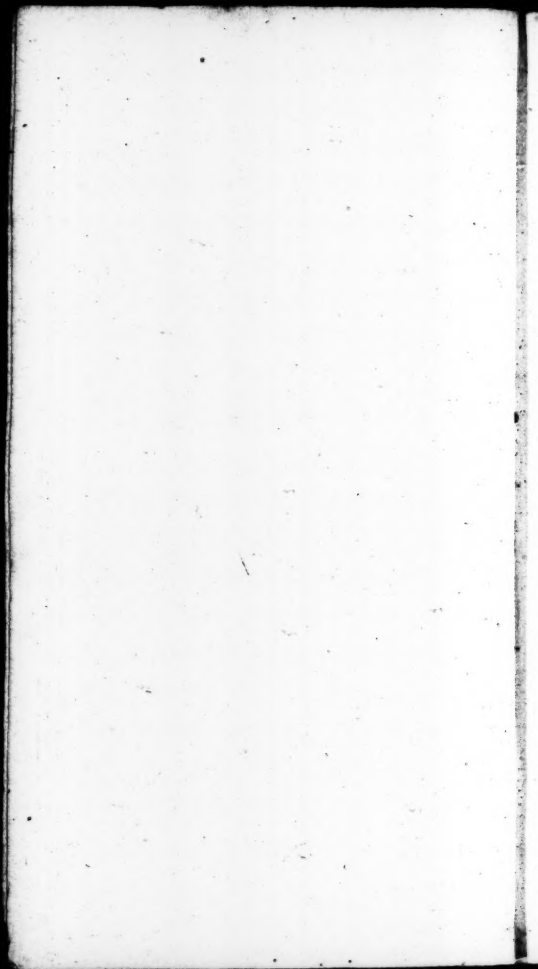
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By *Anthony Horneck* D. D.  
Preacher at the *Savoy*.

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L O N D O N :

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THE  
P R E F A C E  
T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**T**He following  
Discourse was  
occasioned by a  
young Man's being  
unfortunately kill'd  
in *Bartholomew* Fair,  
whose Friends, led  
partly by natural Af-  
fection, partly by  
. A 3            love

## *The Preface*

love to the young  
Mans Vertues, were  
pleas'd to desire me  
to preach a Sermon  
at his Funeral, and  
because they would  
thereby be servicea-  
ble to the living, and  
more especially to  
men of the same age  
with the Deceased,  
entreated me to  
pitch upon the Text  
which appears in the  
front of the ensuing  
Trea-

*to the Reader.*

Treatise. Having gratified their desire in that particular, they gave me some Motives and Arguments to publish it, which I could not well resist. But the Discourse, as it was deliver'd at St. Sepulchres Church on the 20 of *September* being too short to make any thing like a Book of it, I resolv'd upon

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## *The Preface*

second thoughts to enlarge it, and with these enlargements & additions it comes now abroad; though in an age so fertile of excellent Sermons, I might be discouraged from adding any of mine own, yet since every man in his station is bound to contribute to the common Interest of Religion ; having  
this

*to the Reader.*

this opportunity, I was willing to embrace it, because it's possible, that some or other who lights upon these Papers, may think of the *Contents*, and by the assistance of the divine Spirit, be perswaded early to consecrate himself to unfeigned and impartial Devotion. The great debauchery and looseness of  
of

## *The Preface*

of the Youth of this Age, is enough to oblige us, and a sufficient call to do all we can to stem the flood of Impiety, which rages so much in the younger sort, and proves too often the occasion both of their temporal and eternal ruine. All I shall add is this, to entreat the Reader to become a sup-

*to the Reader.*

Supplicant with me  
at the Throne of  
Grace, that both this  
and other mens en-  
deavours of this  
kind, may prove ef-  
fectual to recal both  
young and old from  
the errours of their  
ways, and that God  
(as it is in our Li-  
turgy) would shortly  
occomplish the number of  
his Elect, that we with  
all those who are depar-  
ted

## *The Preface, &c.*

*ted in the true Faith may  
have our perfect consum-  
mation and bliss in his  
Eternal and Everlasting  
Glory.*

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**The**



## T H E

*First Fruits of Reason.*

## ECCLES. 12. 1.

*Remember now thy Creator in  
the days of thy youth.*

**T**His Book of *Ecclesiastes* is generally looked upon as *Solomon's* recantation Sermon, in which he renounces his former Follies, and having seen the vanity of the world, and the pleasures of it, like a man come to himself again, aspires to nobler delights, and after a woful fall, lifts up his sinking head, and beholds, and re-embraceth the true and glorious liberty of Gods Children. Curiosity had led him not onely into a search of Nature, but into

B                      that

that of Sin and Impiety too; and while Greatness, and Riches, and a fawning Court flattered him with power to do what he pleased, he at once forgot the baseness of his slavery, and over-looked the heinousness of his Iniquity: As if it had been too mean for a Sovereign Prince to commit puny sins, he transgressed above the ordinary rate of Mortals, and if it be true what the *Jewish Rabbins* say, that his inquisitive humour made him even venture upon the mystery of the *black art*, it's like, that, together with his fondness of Heathenish Women, enticed him to Idolatry. If this Book be his penitential Monument, we may believe his Repentance was great, and signal, and that after this, his *Cloathing was Sackcloth*, and he *mingled his drink with weeping*. Sins of a deep dye require profound Contrition;

tion; and it is impossible to be truly sensible of monstrous, and unparallell'd Ingratitude, and not to express that sense by very visible and eminent Humiliations. One great Character of true Repentance, is a hearty endeavour after the Conversion of others, and this excellent sign we find in this Convert or returning Prodigal. For not to mention the Counsel he gives to all degrees of men in the foregoing Chapters; in that before us, his kindly Calls and Admonitions to young men, speak a קהלת *Koheleth*, or a Soul earnestly desirous to gather all men into the Sheepfold of Grace and Mercy. And of these Calls that in my Text, is not the least: *Remember now thy Creator in thy days of thy youth.*

By way of Explication, I shall

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only

## 4 *The First Fruits*

only tell you *First*, That what we  
 render here *in the days*  
 בִּימֵי בְחֵרְתֶּךָ *of thy youth*, is in the O-  
 riginal *in the days of thy*  
*Choice*. So youth is called.

1. Because in that Age man  
 chuseth his Employment, and  
 when he first enters upon the Stage  
 of the World, after he comes from  
 under Tutors and Governours, he  
 determines, what Calling, or Pro-  
 fession he shall take to.

2. Because in that Age particu-  
 larly, when Reason exerts its full  
 strength, God sets the Tree of  
 Life, and the Tree of Knowledge  
 of Good and Evil before us, Hea-  
 ven and Earth, Paradise and the  
 World, Righteousness and Sin, Life  
 and Death, and leaves us to our  
 choice, according to which our  
 portion and reward will be, when  
 the

the Soul appears before Gods dread Tribunal.

*Secondly*, As our youth is the Age wherein a Choice must needs be made, so the Wiseman here bids us chuse, *remembring our Creator*. Which the *Chaldee Paraphrast* expounds, *Remember thy Creator so as to glorifie him in the days of thy youth*, which Paraphrase is so sound, that we need not search out for another interpretation; for as the serious practice of Religion is meant by that Remembrance, so that practice, is in a manner nothing else but *glorifying God in our Souls and Bodies*, called so by the Apostle 1 Cor. 6. 20. And *Herein is my father glorified*, that ye bear much fruit, saith our Saviour, Joh. 15. 8. Nor need we wonder how God can be glorified by Fruits of righ-

## 6      *The First Fruits*

teousness that we bring forth; For as these point at the Sun which warms them into being, or at God, by whose Word, and Power, and Influence they grow, and ripen, and come to perfection, so they proclaim the glory of his Grace, and discover how kind, how merciful, how bountiful, and how liberal that Supreme Being is in bestowing such gifts on men, gifts which Nature cannot confer, nor Angels distribute, nor the greatest Monarchs impart to their Favorites. And hereby the happy person, whose life bears such Fruits is encouraged to glorifie the spring and Fountain of them. Others also, that see them, and receive comfort or benefit by them, cannot but adore and admire the Divine Goodness, which is pleased to display its glory in such communications of his Holiness; and as  
An-

Angels rejoyce at a sinners Conversion here on earth, so they cannot but magnifie and glorifie God for the fruits, and good works which after their Conversion such men bring forth. Those ministering Spirits are entirely intent upon Gods Glory, and the greater the number is of those that contribute to Gods Glory, the greater is their joy, and with their Joy, their Praises, and celebrations of the Divine Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, are advanced.

This being premised, it will be easie to guess at the subjects of the ensuing Discourse, which if we follow the Text close, can be no other than these.

1. *What it is to remember God ;*  
for that's implied here.

2. *What force there is in remem-*  
bring

## 8      *The First Fruits*

*bring God under the notion of  
our Creator.*

3. *Why the strict observance of  
these two Lessons is particu-  
larly necessary in the days of  
our youth ?*

*First, What it is to remember  
God.*

1. So to remember his Omni-  
science and Omnipresence, as to  
stand in awe of him : For this is  
no speculative, but a practical Re-  
membrance. The Name of God  
speaks his being present in all pla-  
ces, and knowing whatever pas-  
ses in Heaven and in Earth. A  
truth which even the wiser Hea-  
thens were sensible of ; and when  
they said, that *Jovis omnia plena*, that  
all places were full of the Supreme  
Deity, no doubt they meant, that  
God



God was present in Heaven by his Glory, on Earth by his Providence, and in Hell by his Justice; that above us he stands as Judge, under us as our Supporter, and on both sides of us as an Assessor and Speculator of our actions whether they be good or evil. So that he who remembers God, must necessarily remember his Omniscience, and Omnipresence; and in vain are these remembred, except we stand in awe of him. And this was it, which God thought fit to put among the first Lessons he gave to *Abraham* his friend, Gen. 17. 1. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be perfect.* i. e. Behave thy self in all places, like a person sensible of an all-seeing Eye above him, like one who believes God sees him, and hears him, and is not far from him; that knows his down-sitting and

## 10 *The First Fruits.*

his uprising, and understands his thoughts afar off! This Remembrance is a necessary and essential part of the fear of God, and he that lays this Remembrance by, will stick at no sin he can commit with safety, without exposing his Credit, or Honour, or Interest. This Remembrance is a bridle for our Lusts, and he that sees God, where-ever he walks or sits, or stands or lies, will not be easily taken with the beauty of sin and vanity. It was therefore an ingenious, as well as a religious reply, which *St. Ephrem* made to the Harlot, who enticed him to be naught with her, and was very urgent with him to assign her a place where she should meet him. In the Market-place, *saith he*, to-morrow at Noon-day. Fye, answered the Harlot, are not you ashamed to be taken notice of of men,

men, that will pass by, and see us. To this, St. Ephrem: Art thou ashamed to be seen by men, and dost thou not blush to venture upon this villany in the sight of God? Can the eyes of men make thee afraid, and is the revenging Eye of God no dissuasive from thy wickedness?

2. To Remember God, is so to remember his Goodness, his Mercies, and gracious Providences, as to live a life of love and gratitude. We cannot name God, but we must understand by that expression, one from whom every good and perfect gift descends, by whom all creatures are fed, maintain'd, and cherish'd, and preserved; who opens his hand, and filleth the desire of every living thing, and to whom we in particular are beholding for all the necessities, conveniencies,

niencies, accommodations, and superfluities we enjoy. But this remembrance is insignificant, and like sounding Brass and a tinkling Cymbal, except it touches the Heart, with a strong desire and endeavour of gratitude. Kindnesses like fire must give heat, and as among men he is supposed not to remember what such a great man hath done for him, that shews him no respect, or doth what is prejudicial to his Honour and Interest, so God looks upon him as a person that remembers neither him, nor his Mercies, in whom this remembrance works no earnest care to please him. And whatever the pretences of remembering may be, where it doth not influence the life, nor produces love in the inward and outward man, it's Contempt, not Remembrance, Hypocrisie, not Gratitude. He properly

ly remembers God, that takes notice of his Works, and the operations of his Hands, sees his Finger in the blessings he enjoys, and clings to his great Benefactor with ardent affections, that never thinks of his goodness without admiration, and whenever he considers how kind God hath been to him, ruminates in his mind with *David*, *What reward shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits ?* Psal. 116.

12. It was therefore with respect no doubt to this practical acknowledgement that the same *Psalmist* gives this exhortation, *Psal. 105.*

5. *Remember ye his marvellous works, the wonders and the judgments of his wrath.* They that heretofore painted the *Graces* with hand in hand, intimated, that one good turn requires another, and to neglect such returns among men, hath ever been counted odious.

## 14 *The First Fruits*

dious. *Monster* hath been the best name that hath been given to such persons in all Ages, and therefore none can suppose, that the neglect of them with respect to God, our kindest friend, will pass for a tolerable infirmity. He that doth not return acts of love upon the remembrance of Gods preservations, deliverances, and munificence, will have the whole World and his own Conscience to boot for his accusers, and the crime is inexcusable, because the wretch eludes the force of the greatest charms, and the strongest motives to Love and reciprocal Affection.

3. To remember God, is so to remember his Laws, and injunctions, as to yield actual obedience. He that acknowledges a God, must acknowledge him to be the governor

nour of the World , and consequently that he governs by Laws agreeable to his greatness, and Holiness ; and therefore when God tells the *Israelites*, how they should remember him, he chuses to word it thus : *Remember ye the Law of my servant Moses, which I commanded him in Horeb, with all the statutes and judgements*, Mal. 4. 4. Gods Laws would signifie nothing, if they were not intended , as a rule for his Subjects, and the impertinency of remembring God , as our Law-giver , without suitable obedience, is sufficiently shewn in that expostulation of Christ, *Luke 6. 46. Why call ye me Lord, and do not do the things which I say.* Wonderful was the care God took , that the *Jews* should remember his injunctions. They were not only to be in their Frontlets and Wrist-bands , but the Fathers of  
their

## 16      *The First Fruits*

their respective Families , were commanded to teach them diligently unto their Children , to talk of them when they were sitting in their houses, and when they walked by the way, and when they lay down , and when they rose again. They were to write them also upon the Posts of their Houses , and upon their Gates, *Deut. 6. 7, 8, 9.* And what could be the design of it, but to shew, that in vain we remember him, except we remember his Laws so as to be ruled and governed by them. And therefore we may justly conclude, that he who being tempted either to uncleanness, or drunkenness, or lying , or injustice, or dissembling, or Pride, or ill-language , or neglect of Alms , and Prayer , and consideration of his ways , remembers the words of the Lord, and what God hath said  
in



in his Gospel, and trembles at it, and bids the Devil depart from him, will be applauded in Heaven for an admirable Memory more, than if with *Themistocles* he could tell all the names of the Citizens of *Athens*; or with *Mithridates* remember two and twenty Languages. To arrive to such a remembrance, there is no need of studying the art of Memory. The Laws are generally known: The application is all in all; and he that knowing his Masters will applies the rules of it to the particular actions of his life, and by them regulates his thoughts, and desires, and words, and actions, is the happy man that remembers God to the comfort and edification of his Soul. And to all this, he will be engaged more readily if he remembers that God is his Creator, which brings in the second point. Second-

## 18      *The First Fruits*

Secondly, *What force there is in remembring God under the notion of our Creator.*

I. To remember God as our Creator, is to think of him as the Author of our being and well being, that we have nothing we can claim as our own, and that all we are and have is his charity; that originally he did frame us of nothing, and by and in him we live and breath, and move in the sphere appointed for us. That we as well as the vast Fabrick of the world, are the product of his exuberant goodness, and that all things in Heaven and in Earth were formed by the word of his power. He that seriously thinks of this, will think no service too costly, no Incense too sweet, no Present too great, no Sacrifice too  
pre-

pretious to lay upon his Altar. He that raises a Slave out of dust, and advances him to an honourable employment, expects he should think nothing too good for the promoting of his interest, who hath so generously lifted him up from the Dunghil, much more may he, that speaks a creature from nothing into being, and gives him a view of all the glorious things, his powerful hand hath wrought, which he must have been forever ignorant of, if he had continued in the shades of nothing. He that creates gives all that the Creature hath; and it's hard, if he that makes the Tenant and gives him Lands and Houses, may not reserve to himself a quit-rent, or a Pepper-corn rather, as an acknowledgement, that the Creature is the Usufructuary of his possessions. All the service man can do

do, or that God requires of us, is nothing but a small and inconsiderable Rent, our great Landlord reserves, whereby we may own him the Maker and Author of our welfare. Creation imports, that we are made for his glory, and a wonderful dignity it is, that God will make use of such poor worms to promote and advance his glory. To be made for his glory, and to dishonour him; to receive our breath on purpose that we may shew forth his praise, and to act, as if we had no relation to him, are things inconsistent, and imply a contradiction. He denies that he hath his being from God, that will not consecrate himself to do him service, and is an Infidel under the divine influence, while he refuses to hearken to his Counsels. It was therefore a very rational inference

ference which *David* made, *Psal.*  
100. 2, 3. *Serve the Lord with  
gladness, come before his presence  
with singing. Know ye that the  
Lord he is God, it is he that hath  
made us, and not we our selves, we  
are his people and the sheep of his  
pasture.*

2. To remember God as our  
Creator, is to be importunate with  
him to create in us clean hearts,  
and to renew right spirits within  
us, that we may be capable of  
conversing with him forever. The  
innocence which the first creation  
gave us, was lost and tarnished by  
the Fall. The glory of righteous-  
ness and holiness in Paradise, the  
joy of Angels, and the envy of  
Devils, went off, and vanished  
with our Apostacy, and only some  
ruines of it do remain, to shew  
how bright and splendid our Souls  
were

## 22. *The First Fruits*

were in that state. Hence comes a natural proneness to evil, and that sinful inclination prompts us to greater contempt of God. Hence it is, that an aversion from goodness sits heavy on our Souls, and when we would do good, evil is present with us, and in this state we cannot please God; this is the bar which forbids access to his Throne; and the Soul that continues in this condition to the end, is out of all hopes of ever enjoying his beatifick presence in Heaven. This misery discovers the necessity of a new Creation, the rather, because with God neither *Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new creature*, Gal. 6. 15. When I say, a new *Creation*, I do not mean it of new Faculties, but of new Qualities and Endowments of a new byass, and bent, and inclination of our better

ter part ; and this is the work of God , and to effect it, the same power must be employed that spoke the World into being ; for as there, so here the *Chaos* and the shapeless matter must be separated and divided , the power of darkness dissipated , and a new Light must arise in our Understandings, a Light whereby spiritual things and their excellency , necessity , and transcendency above sublunary comforts may be discerned, and the Soul look into things that are not seen. The Spirit of God must move here too, and upon waters too, even on the waters of repentance, and penitential Tears. This Spirit must supple, and warm, and cherish the feeble parts, make the Soul brisk and agile , and ready unto every good word and work, and a new face of all things must appear, new Thoughts, new Desires,

## 24      *The First Fruits*

fires, new Breathings, new Notions, a new Language, new Delights, and new Affections too. The sins that were loved before, must be hated now; and the Follies which caused laughter, must now cause grief and sorrow. And this new Creation God is ready to bestow, if our earnest Addresses knock at Heaven Gate. The Soul that watches at his door, shall not be sent away empty; he that is able to create this new Heart, hath promised it too, if our laziness and love of the world, and contempt of the mercy, doth not discourage him. So that to remember our Creator, is not onely to reflect upon his power, but our duty too.

3. To remember our Creator, is to think, that he who hath created a Heaven for the tractable and do-



docile, and sincere, hath created a Hell too, where he means to lash the stubborn and impenitent man. This *Solomon* alludes to in the last *Verse* of this *Chapter*, where he tells us, that *God shall bring every work into judgement with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Tophet is ordain'd of old*, saith the Prophet, *Isai.* 30. 33. And when God provided Mansions sweet and pleasant for his Favourites, it was but necessary to create and make a Goal too, where the despisers of his grace might to eternal Ages bewail the loss of infinite and eternal mercy; Mercy which now entreats, and courts them, and comes to them in all the soft dresses of comfort, and sues to them in the still voice of a tender Father, offers them Crowns, and Empires, and an endless Felicity, lies

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weep-

weeping at their feet, runs after them, pulls them by the sleeve, and beseeches them not to neglect so great Salvation. He that seriously thinks of this, surely cannot run into the Devils arms, nor be in love with the broad way, where so many thousands pass into Perdition. These thoughts must needs be great motives to prevent the accomplishment of Gods threatenings, who will not let that Prison he hath created stand empty, when so many do deserve it, and in despite of all his endeavours to the contrary, run into it, and make haste to be miserable. The Creator of all things *beholding every thing that he had made*, saw *that all was very good*, and therefore you'll say, surely he did not create a Hell, for that cannot be reconciled to the Standard of goodness. But it's one thing what Sufferers

ferers or Malefactors, and another what Magistrates and Wise men do say. There is scarce a Prisoner but finds fault with his confinement. But doth any wise man therefore judge that Prisons are not for the common good, or that they are needless in a Commonwealth? If God were to take advantage of men, that make themselves Vessels of his wrath, not one but would condemn him for making or ordaining a place of torment; but his Justice requires other things, and that's a good Attribute as well as his Mercy, and punishment makes for his Honour and Glory, as well as his gentleness and compassion. He that remembers God as his Creator, must view the everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, as well as the house made without hands eternal in the Heavens; and

## 28      *The First Fruits*

if he do both, he is in the greatest probability of entring into invincible resolutions, to shake off the yolk of Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, that he may be capable of entring into his Masters joy. But then these resolutions, if they shall be to any purpose, must be made in the days of his youthful vigour, which leads me to the last particular.

*Thirdly, Why the strict observance of these two Lessons is particularly necessary in the days of our youth.*

I. Because sin is more easily mortified, when these motives are applied early in the days of our youth. The load that hinders us from entring in at the strait Gate, may then be thrown off with greater facility than afterward. The  
ten-

tenderer the Branch is, the sooner it is bowed; and the softer the Rust is, the more easily it is scoured away. Sin in the youthful age, is but in its bud as it were, and therefore more easily nipt; and Corruption not being come to any great hardness yet, is the sooner dispersed, and discountenanced. The Devil doth but then begin to act his part in the Soul, and therefore is more easily dislodged; and though one or two evil Spirits may have already taken up their habitation there, yet the number not being advanced to a Legion yet, they may be crushed with greater ease. But sin being by age, as it were, caked and baked together, mocks the *Fullers-earth*, and the help of *Soap* and *Snow-water*. The blackness becomes purely *Ethiopian*, and the *spots* turn into tokens of the *Leo-*

## 30 *The First Fruits*

*pard*, which makes the change more difficult, if not impossible. It's true, some that have streamed out their golden days in voluptuousness and luxury, have yet at last proved eminent Saints; but as this is an argument of the extraordinary Grace of God, so no consequence can be drawn from it, that what God doth for special reasons for some, he will do for all. Some few grow rich after fifty, but that gives but small encouragement to men that do not thrive in the world before; and whatever lucky hits some may have, that makes but few expect the like: The sooner the Antidote is applied, the greater hopes there is that the power of the Poison will be weakened; and the longer it lies in the bowels, the more difficult grows the cure. This stands to reason, when sins are young, the children  
of

of *Edom* may soon be dash'd against the stones; but being become men of War, they despise all opposition. Habits become a second nature, and when follies are become natural, and mingle with the complexion and Spirits, they are over look'd as harmless, or men despair of rooting of them up. The horror of any sin goes off by custome, and when men are used to it, they are so far from repenting, that they are apt to look upon themselves as innocent; when Lions are not yet used to range abroad for prey, they may be tamed; but being become lusty and strong, all endeavours of cicuration are vain; and though we are told of *Androdus* his Lion, that grew tame when he was of full age, yet as one Swallow doth not make a Summer, so neither is it advisable to venture into the

## 32      *The First Fruits*

Sea without skill in swimming, because one or two, ignorant of the art, have been saved from drowning by a Miracle. Men give God but little encouragement to employ his miraculous power to convert them, when during the vigour of their age, they have mocked all his Stratagems, and defeated his Methods of Compassion, and whatever God hath done upon extraordinary occasions, and under extraordinary circumstances, we are assur'd by the *Psalmist* that he *sware in his wrath*, that they who had grieved him Forty years in the Wilderness should *never enter into his rest*, Psal. 95. 10, 11.

2. Except a man remember his Creator in the days of his youth, he is not in a likely way to compass all those graces which are fit  
and



and proper for a Candidate of Eternity. The vertues which the Holy Ghost saith, are necessary for a Christian, are not to be acquired or purchased but by long striving, frequent encountring of Temptations, assiduous labour, and constant enduistry, and indefatigable circumspection. Shadows of Graces are compassed in a shorter space, but habits of Goodness are the work of time. One Virtue may possibly be got this year, another the next, another the third. Of *Ammonas* we read, that he was fourteen years conquering his anger and passion, and others have laboured many more before they arrived to a habit of meekness and patience. Before a man can say that he is master of such a Virtue, he must have several tryals, and those tryals occur not all in one week, or in one month. He that

is free from a temptation this year, may have enough of it three years hence. By little conquests way must be made for greater, and he that overcomes his little peevishnesses for some time, prepares for overcoming bigger affronts and injuries. We read of no *Ex tempore* Saints, and those who have arrived to qualifications which have made them fit for the bliss of another world, have spent many years to bring themselves to a spiritual relish of the power of godliness. Heaven is not to be gained by a single vertue, but there must be *adding unto our faith vertue, unto vertue knowledge, unto knowledge temperance, unto temperance godliness, unto godliness patience, unto patience brotherly kindness, and unto brotherly kindness charity,* 2 Pet. 1. 4, 5. He is no Christian that knows not what it is to grow  
in

in grace ; and when we are to labour after perfection , it's evident that we must begin betimes. So that if a man doth not begin this practical remembrance of his Creator in the days of his youth , he hath not time enough to become master of this art, or to commence Graduate in this piece. of *Philosophy*.

3. This early remembrance of the Great Creator invites the early manifestations of Gods love, and is the Key to the choicest comforts and consolations. Of all the *Apostles* St. *John* alone is called the *Disciple whom Jesus loved*. He loved them all, but this with greater tenderness than ordinary , because, as most Divines observe, he was the youngest , and in the days of his youth remembered his Masters will and his own duty. *When Israel*  
rael

## 36 *The First Fruits*

*rael was a Child*, i. e. when in his tender age he followed me with all his heart, studied my Laws, and walked with God, *I loved him*, that is with a higher love of complacency than others, saith God, *Hof. I.I.I.* The youthful *David*, when in the wilderness he liv'd retired from the world, contemplated things celestial and sublime, made the Creator of all things the darling of his Soul, and found no such delight any where, as in meditating of Gods testimonies, felt what the kinder influences of Gods Spirit were, and what was the exceeding greatness of his power, whereof that extraordinary assistance he speaks of to King *Saul*, was a signal testimony: *Thy servant kept his fathers sheep, and there came a Lion and a Bear and took a Lamb out of the flock, and I went out after him, and delivered it out of his mouth;*  
and

and when he arose against me I caught him by his beard, and smote him and slew him, 1 Sam. 17. 34, 35. When Joseph's innocence and tender years led him to the fear of God, and made him have that aversion from sin in himself and others, that he told his Father of his brethrens faults; God favour'd him with more than ordinary tokens of his love, which appear'd afterward more visibly, by his making him Vice-Roy of Egypt. Early Fruit is ever most acceptable, and an early remembrance of our Creator comes before him as Incense, smells sweet as the morning Sacrifice, and vies with the morning Rose for fragrancy.

*Practical Inferences.*

*First*, Though we allow not of the *Platonick* notion, that all our know-

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knowledge is nothing but remembrance, yet Religion may justly be called a Remembrance of things we knew and heard of before. The lines of good and evil are engraven upon our hearts. The Finger of God hath written them upon our Souls, and education together with the various Sermons we hear, make these Characters much brighter. So that if at any time we are to abhor that which is evil, or to cleave to that which is good, if we are tempted to actions doubtful and uncertain, whether they be agreeable or disagreeable to the will of God, it's but remembering what an Almighty hand hath imprinted on our hearts, or what formerly we have treasured up there, and thus we may by the Grace of God resist and overcome the temptation. Nay, if we remember how at  
such

such a time our Consciences checkt us for such actions, and what reluctancies we felt, when prompted to the commission. If we remember how at another time our pious Neighbour reprov'd us for such a fault, told us, it was an affront offered to God, and a snare to ruine our immortal Souls. If we remember how vehemently the Minister of the Ordinances of God declaim'd against such a sin, what Arguments he alleadg'd against it, what dissuasives he produced, what obtestations and entreaties he used to discourage us from the Offence, all this will signally help to restraine us from yielding to the evil motion. For this we need no extraordinary memories, and the memories we make use of in our civil affairs, when we remember what we did or what hapned such a year, will serve to put us in  
mind

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mind of our duty. It's love to a thing that makes us remember what may contribute to the promoting of it. And if our love to Religion were but as strong as it is to our Riches, we should very easily remember the arguments that God and his Ministers have given us to dissuade us from the sins we are inclined to. Were we truly concerned for our Souls we should soon remember what we have heard out of the Word of God, and which makes for the practice of the vertues, necessary to salvation. When we are tempted to Pride or Anger, if we did but remember how we have hated these sins in others, and how odious they have appeared to us, when we have seen our Neighbours fall into them, it would be a sufficient discouragement from the commission. That we have no memories



ries in this case, is not so much a defect of nature, as our will. We are wilfully forgetful of our duty, and that makes us excuse the neglect of it; we will not remember our sins, and that tempts us to impenitence. Thus we cheat our Souls, and that's but an ill preparative for the tremendous *audit* at the Bar of Gods Justice. The day will come when we shall remember our offences and neglects whether we will or no. There is not a sinner now, who willingly forgets what he hath been doing against God and his own Soul, but will be forced to remember it to his cost and sorrow, when an angry God shall look him in the face. And is it not our greatest interest then to remember now in this our day the things which belong unto our peace; to remember our Errours, that we may turn from them ;  
to

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to remember our duties to God and man, that we may conscientiously discharge them ; to remember what our Creator, our Father, our greatest Benefactor requires of us ; to remember the Exhortations, the Entreaties, the Expostulations, the Adjurations of a merciful God, that the Great *Jehovah* may remember us in that day when he makes up his Jewels, and spare us as a man would spare his Son that serves him ?

*Secondly*, There is hardly any place of Scripture that is more vulgarly known than this I have discoursed of ; our very Children learn it almost as soon as they can speak, and imbibe it with the ordinary questions, *Who made you ? Who redeem'd you ? Who sanctifies you ?* But when men are grown up to a just strength, and vigour  
of

of Age, it fares with this *Motto* as it doth with Scripture Sentences written upon Walls in Country Churches; not one in forty minds it. Youth (*thus pleads the Age*) must have its swing; and what should the sprightly Lad do, but follow his Amours and Vanities? The blood that dances in his Veins prompts him to gayety; and to restrain him in his frolics, would be to torment him before his time, and looks like an intolerable affront offered to his blooming years. Young men must be merry; and though that mirth for the most part is nothing but licentiousness, yet as extravagant as it is, it is but a trick of youth. Religion is generally accounted only as a proper attendant of the aged and feeble; and when men are unfit for any business in the world, they then think themselves fit to think

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think seriously of the Kingdom of Heaven. But surely this is no Gospel-Divinity, but a Doctrine taught by the Father of lies the Prince of Devils. Those that can think so, never considered the import of Christ's Law, nor the pains the Primitive Believers took to arrive to happiness. The whole Bible is against these dangerous positions, and the Holy Ghost knows of no other Repentance, but what is begun betimes, and prosecuted by a strict obedience. There is not a word of comfort in all the Scriptures for men who have been baptiz'd into Christ and never begin to remember their Creator seriously, till either old Age or a Death-bed refreshes their memories. We read indeed of fruits brought forth in old Age, and those highly commended too; but then it is in such men as have  
been

been early planted in the House of the Lord, and flourish in the Courts of our God, like Cedars and Palm-trees, that discover their early verdure and fragrancy, and continue it to the last, *Psal.* 92. 12, 13, 14. And let no man tell me here, that this is to drive old Penitents into despair. No, it's rather a motive to double their pains, to redeem their time, and to give all diligence to make their Calling and Election sure. What should men do who have lost much time, but husband the remainder to the best advantage? And indeed if they seriously consider what opportunities they have lost, how many years they have thrown away upon things that do not profit; what Calls they have rejected, what checks of Conscience they have baffled, what Mercy, and Love, and Pity they have despised, and  
how

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how refractory they have been under the most powerful arguments that have been suggested to them, they have no reason to loiter much, nor to cry a little more sleep, a little more slumber in the ways of sin. They had need pray harder than other men, and labour more than others; and give greater demonstrations of love and charity than their Neighbours, who have been wise much earlier, that if they cannot arrive to any high degrees of Glory, they may however save themselves from the wrath to come, and from everlasting burnings.

*Thirdly*, Hear this all ye, in whose Veins healthful and vigorous blood doth flow. Fancy you hear the deceased Party here call to you from his Grave, or rather from the Regions of *dis*, from the other

other world. Fancy you hear him say, O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn your glory into shame, how long will ye love Vanity and seek after leasing? In this other world, where my Soul is now, the Scene is changed, and all things look with another face. Here all things appear big and dreadful, and in amazing shapes. Here is a glorious God, that will not be put off with Forms and Schemes, and little complemental Devotions, but expects conformity to the Image of his Son, even to the same mind, and temper, and contempt of the world, which was also in Christ Jesus. O flatter not your selves with hopes of easie accounts, or fancies that God will not be so cruel as to condemn a company of poor Sinners to the bottomless Gulph. Rest assur'd he is no respecter of persons. He is not  
frighted

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frighted by crowds, and numbers, and multitudes from making them feel the weight of his anger. Be advised, be entreated, be perswaded to remember your Creator in the days of your youth. O do not put the evil day far from you! Let the great Creator be ever in your minds. Where-ever you are carry his Image in your Bosom, that you may do nothing unworthy of his goodness and holiness. Make him your dearest and your greatest treasure. Cling to him as your onely refuge in the evil day. Make it your business to be guided by his Eye, and to be instructed and governed by his Counsel. Be ye not as the Horse and Mule that have no understanding. Be not afraid of any troubles that may befall you upon the account of your obedience. Be confident, he hath rewards infinite, unspeakable,



able, incomprehensible rewards, to recompense all your losses, though you should lose life it self for his Names sake. Remember your Reason was given you on purpose to remember him. Remember that therefore he distinguished you from Bruits and Beasts, that you should think of his will and do it. Remember you are his Creatures, and he your Lord, your Master, your King, and your Supreme Governour. Remember you have not a better friend in all the world than him. Remember with what tenderness and gentleness he uses you, what offers he makes you, and how dreadful it will be to undervalue such expressions of love. Remember the thousand Deliverances, Preservations, and gracious Providences he hath sent you. Remember the danger you are in. The Devil  
D like

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like a roaring Lyon walks about seeking whom he may devour. You have Enemies on every side of you : All lie in wait to devour you. Remember the veracity of God ; he will not vary one tittle from his word. O do not trespass upon his patience any more. Abuse his Mercy and Long-suffering no longer. But let his goodness lead you to a serious, speedy, and universal Reformation. The Judge is at the door, and seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation, and godliness ! Should the person deceased appear to you at this time, and preach these Lessons to you, would not you tremble and fear, and stand astonished, and go home, and take care that you might not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord  
Jesus

Jesus Christ? Why Sirs? these things are as true, as if a Ghost from the other world did repeat them to you. And if they be eternal Truths, O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? And therefore

*Fourthly*, If the Remembrance of your Creator cannot melt your hearts, O let the remembrance of your Redeemer make you wiser. Remember what the Son of God hath suffered for you. Remember what Agonies, what Torments, what bitter Scoffs and Reproaches he endured to rescue and free you from the bondage of sin and of the Devil. Remember you are bought with a price, with the precious blood of the immaculate

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Lamb. Remember you were bought to be his peculiar people, and bought that you should be your own no more ; that you should not live to your selves , but to him that bought you at the expence of his Bloud and Labour. Remember he bled for you. Remember he laid down his life for you. Remember, greater love can no man shew than that he lay down his life for his friends. Remember he died for you when you were enemies. Remember he thought nothing too good for you. Remember who it was that did all this for you, even the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the eternal Son of God, that could have glorified himself in your endless misery , but would not ; and to let you see the exceeding riches of his Grace, humbled himself to the death

death of the Cross, that the astonishing Mercy might work in you a loathing of every weight, and every sin, which doth so easily beset you. Can you remember all this, and feel no resolutions within, to shew forth the Praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Can you remember all this and forbear crying out with the Apostle, I count all things dross and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of *Christ Jesus* my Lord?

*Fifthly*, Would we know, how we may lay a foundation for a long and healthy life. The principle here laid down is it. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* In youth we commonly lay the Foundation of future Diseases, which shorten our days, and fill our lives with various Distempers;

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and while people trespass upon the vigour of their Age, and offer violence to Nature when young, they consider not how by this means they give death an opportunity to enter, and the blood in that age is commonly so corrupted, that all the Medicines afterward cannot abolish the corruption, or eradicate it out of the Bowels. This early remembrance of God will help to restrain that extravagance, and as it contributes to the soundness of the Body, so it cannot but be an excellent preparative for the long continuance of it. Set aside some distracted persons, the desire and endeavour of mankind is to live long. To this end they use Preventives, Preservatives, Catharticks, Diureticks, Emeticks, Restoratives, shun all things that they apprehend noxious, and hearken to every little story that directs

rects them how to free themselves from the too early approaches of sullen death, that *King of Terrours*. Indeed under violent Pain, or extream Poverty, or intolerable Disgrace, some do wish for death, but that's only a sudden passion caus'd by the present pressing misfortune, but if that were once over, they would be content with the *Collier* in the *Fable*, to carry their burthen, even the burthen of their flesh about them a little longer. We are told of strange endeavours used in *India* by the *Pagan Kings*, and the *Grandeets* in *their Courts* to prolong life. Some do even spend their Patrimonies to find out the *Universal Medicine*, and an *Antidote* against death; some with Pearls dissolved in the purest Dew of Heaven seek to lengthen out our days; but this remembering our Creator in the days

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*of our youth*, will do more than all Drugs and Medicines, more than all the Cordials and Julips in the world, and whatever either the Wisdom, or Folly of man hath invented to procure longevity. It's evident, that by this *remembering our Creator* is meant nothing but the *Fear of God*, for thus *Solomon* explains himself, *v. 13.* of this Chapter; where to reinforce the admonition *v. 1.* he onely changes the Phrase, but means the same thing. *Fear God, and keep his commandments*, for *that's the whole duty of man*; and to assure us, that this early *remembrance* of God in the way to long life, he adds, *Prov. 10. 27. The fear of the Lord prolongs days.* But because this truth is believed but by very few, it will not be amiss to give such demonstrations of it as may convince any rational man of the weight  
and



and moment of it. And

I. The Duties Religion enjoyns, if seriously and conscientiously practised, tend to health and prolongation of life, as will appear from an induction of particulars. Religion enjoyns *Temperance* in eating and drinking ; and all the world agrees in this, that Temperance is not onely the best Physick, but the best Physician too. Gluttony, and Drunkenness, and Excesses in meat and drink, are fruitful Parents of Diseases, and how men do thereby precipitate themselves into Gouts, Dropsies, Surfeits, Fevers, &c. which are great promoters of an early death , none can be supposed ignorant. Religion forbids all extravagant Passions, which being let loose hugely debilitate Nature. It enjoyns Meekness, Patience, Contentedness, and

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a reasonable service; and where the Passions are kept in good order, in all likelihood the temper and frame of the body will be preserved in health, and a sweet and admirable harmony. From letting the Passions run beyond their just bounds and limits, innumerable mischiefs flow; some by immoderate & inordinate love have kill'd themselves, others by inordinate Anger have fallen into Epilepsies: Some by immoderate grief consume the marrow in their bones; and History tells us of several, such as *Leo X*, Pope of *Rome*, and some *Roman Ladies*, that have in fits of immoderate laughter expired, and given up the ghost.

Religion forbids all anxious and tormenting cares, and carkings, great enemies certainly to health and life; for they not only make the Blood stagnate, clog the Spirits,

rits, hinder a free circulation, but too often have been, and are, the causes of mens laying violent hands upon themselves. This administers Ingredients which make up a good Conscience, and that's a perpetual Feast. It bids us rejoyce in the Lord always, and a constant cheerfulness cannot but be a very great preservative of health, and the vital flame within. It forbids all Fornication, Adultery, Lasciviousness, and exorbitant Lusts; prescribes the modest and moderate use of Marriage, or commends perpetual Virginity; all which is very conducive to health and longevity; and this we need not doubt of, when we see men, who give themselves liberty in hankering after strange Flesh, what work they make for Surgeons and Physicians, how they poison their Bloud, and are so many

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ny walking Graves. Religion prescribes frequent Fasting, and Abstinence, and how beneficial this is to health and a long vigorous life, The examples of the ancient Hermits, and since their time, of other religious men, are ample testimonies. *Simeon Stylites* by this means arrived to the age of 109. *Anthony the Great* to 105. *Paul the first Ascetick* to 103. *Arsenius* to 120. *Venerable Bede* to 92. *Remigius* the famous Archbishop of *Rhemes* (who enjoy'd his Bishoprick 70 years, which is more I think than can be said of any man in publick Office for a thousand years) to 96. *Epiphanius* (not the *Cyprian* Bishop, but another) to 115. Not to mention any more, and most Historians agree in it, that one great means to prolong their years was their spare diet and frequent abstinence, and  
Fasts

Fasts in obedience to Religion. Besides, Religion commands Obedience, Respect, and Tenderneſs to Parents, and to that a ſpecial bleſſing of long life is affixed by promiſe in the fifth Commandment. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God gives thee.* It bids us alſo ſhun all apparent occaſions of miſchief, particularly of evil company, where great rudeneſſes, inſolencies, debaucheries, and many times Murthers are committed, to the endangering both of health and life. Add to all this, that Religion doth peremptorily prohibit all ill language, which is too often the unhappy cauſe of quarrels, ſtrife, fighting, blows, duelling, and aſſaſinations, which ſignally ſhorten the life of man; in alluſion to which *David* tells us, *Pſal.* 34. 12,  
13.

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13. *What man is he that desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.* So that if a man remembers his Creator betimes, makes Conscience of the duties Religion prescribes, and continues in doing so, he lays a foundation for a long and healthy life.

2. This early remembrance of God, gives a man a title to Gods special Providence, and what the effect of *that* is, the *Psalmist* will inform us, *Psal. 91. 14, 16. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him, with long life will I satisfie him, and shew him my salvation.* That there is a special Providence attending those who fear God, is the unanimous voice of all the inspired Writers; and they all agree in this, that *the eyes*

eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the world, to shew himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is upright toward him, as it is said, 2 Chron. 16. 9. And with respect to this special Providence it is that Solomon gives this advice to the Disciple of wisdom, Prov. 3. 1, 2. *My son forget not my Law, and let thy heart attend unto my commandment, for length of days, and long life, and peace shall they add unto thee.* By this special Providence a man is preserved from numberless dangers, which otherwise would crush both health and life. Its this blesses his meat and drink to him, be it more or less, wholesom or unwholesom, removes from it what is noxious and pestilential, gives it a nutritive power, and many times preserves him without meat and drink; for *man doth not live by bread alone, but*

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*but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, as we are told Matth. 4. 4.*

However, this serious remembrance of our Creator, or which is all one, the fear of God makes a man immortal, more effectually than Books and Monuments, or Pillars, or Tombstones, or Fabricks, or Pyramids. For these onely keep up an empty name; but this conscientious fear makes the man himself immortal. Such a person leads a happy life here, and his natural death makes no other alteration in that happy life, than that it gives it greater brightness, greater splendour, greater lustre, and adds to it higher degrees of happiness. And of this Fear, or serious Remembrance of God, it may be said, as it was of the Bread which came down from Heaven, that it is *Meat indeed, and Drink indeed,*



*indeed*, and he that feeds upon it shall never die. For such a mans Soul, which is the principal part of him, at the end or period of his days here, is onely transplanted into a richer ground, and conveyed to a nobler Soil, to better Land, to a larger House, to more pleasant Mansions, and to a more ample Theater: And being removed from hence, it doth not change its nature, but onely her abode; from a Prison, from a Cave, from a Cottage, from a Dungeon, to a more spacious Pallace, where she hath more Elbow-room, and like a Bird freed from her Cage, acts with greater liberty, and sings with greater cheerfulness. And her Body too, sleeps onely for a few years, lies down upon a bed of Turf, till the Soul is thoroughly settled in her new Habitation, and then even that at the sound of the Arch-

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Arch-Angels Trumpet shall awake to a happy immortality, as Christ assures us, *Job. 11. 26.*

And though it's true that many who sincerely remember their Creator, and fear him, are cut off in the prime and flower of their age, and live but a short time in this world, yet that early removal contradicts not the natural tendency of the Fear of God. Still this is the natural course of that stream, and if it met with no extraordinary stop, it would certainly prolong life even here upon earth. But God for special reasons puts a stop sometimes to its natural course, as he hindred the Sun from going down in *Joshua's* time, and from shining out at noon-day in our *Saviour's* time, and the Iron from sinking in *Elishah's* time, and the Fire from scorching in *Nebucadnezzar's* time, and the greedy  
Whale

Whale from consuming or devouring *Jonas*. These creatures, had they been left to their natural course, would have acted otherwise; but an Almighty hand interposing its power and influence, they were restrained in their natural bent and inclination. So the Fear of God, though its natural tendency be to prolong health and life, yet God doth not so tie himself to the natural course of things, but that sometimes, for reasons best known to himself, he may and doth make an alteration in that natural tendency: nor is that alteration any just discouragement from the Fear of God, no more than a mans being sometimes disappointed in his designs is a discouragement from prosecuting his Trade, or Calling, or Profession. So that when God makes an alteration in the natural course or tendency

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dency of this holy Fear, and cuts off men that conscientiously remember him, in the prime and flower of their age, it may be either to advance his own Glory, or to accelerate their happiness, or to keep them from the evil to come, or to chastise their Relatives, who were too fond of these outward Comforts, or to punish wicked men, who as they are by the death of such persons deprived of examples and monitors, and means of grace, so through the just Judgement of God, they are thereby hardned in their sins, which brings on their everlasting misery. Though if we consider the happiness of the next world, in conjunction with this present, as it makes one entire thred or web in a person that truly fears God, still there can be no greater truth than that the Fear of God  
pro;

prolongs life, for it prolongs it to all Eternity. Not to mention that abundance of persons who seem to fear God, do fear him very imperfectly, or not exactly according to the Rules before laid down, which may be the reason, why they do not see this promise fulfilled to them in all the measures of its latitude.

It is confest, that even men that do not trouble their heads about Religion, Swearers, Drunkards, Atheists, Blasphemers, Beasts and Brutes, live to a prodigious age sometimes without the Fear of God, yet is not therefore the conscientious man that lives long in the world a loser by his fear; for though he that fears God, and he that lives in contempt of his Laws, do both enjoy the same blessing, even long Life, yet there is a vast difference in the causes of this  
Blessing;

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Blessing ; for in the former the Blessing comes from a Father's hand, in the other from a Judges. In the former it is a gift of love, in the other of meer generosity. In the former it comes by promise, in the other by a large and diffusive bounty. To the former it is given, that he may be a blessing to his Neighbours, to the other, that he may be a Scourge and Rod to those who live neer him. In the former it is an effect of vertue, in the other of natural constitution. The former receives it because of his universal Obedience, the other hath may be done some little inconsiderable service to Gods Church or Servants, which God scorns to leave unrewarded, and as the service will bear no bigger reward, so God puts him off with a blessing of his left hand.

And from hence it follows, that there

there must be a great difference in the comforts of this blessing. In the former this long Life is in order to greater Mercy ; in the other, in order to his greater condemnation. In the former, like a gentle River, which hath run many miles and enriched the neighbouring Grounds, it mingles at last with the vast Ocean of Glory ; in the other , though like the River *Jordan* it hath extended its course a great way, yet falls at last into the dead Sea , into endless howlings. In the former it is a spiritual Blessing as well as a temporal ; in the other only a temporal. In the former it is a sign that a great deal more is to be added to it ; in the other, that after that, all his Blessings are at an end, and that he shall have no more.

By all which it appears, that this Remembrance of God is no use-

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useless thing. It is profitable to the Body as well as the Soul; and by what I have said, it should seem it is the best Physick in the world. So wisely hath God ordered his Laws and Precepts, that they signally advance the welfare not onely of the inward, but outward man too. O the blindness of poor Mortals that will not see this truth! How calmly, how sweetly, how contentedly may a man live with the Fear of God, while sin, and pleasing his extravagant Lusts hurries the sinner on to a thousand troubles and inconveniencies! Nay, the unwary man sees how his sinful courses, his drinking, and keeping ill Company breaks his Estate, his Body, and his Health, and perhaps the Heart of his Wife and Children. The Fear of God would preserve all these, yet the heedless wretch will take no warning.



ning. Do these men believe another life do you think? No, if they did, they durst as well eat fire, as we say, as venture upon sins, to which the Almighty Judge hath affixed damnation by an irreversible Decree. But what do we talk of another life? If their temporal interest, and the interest of their Bodies, and Estate, and health cannot make them wiser, I know nothing but feeling the flaming anger of a just God, that will do it. To see men run into death and misery, and diseases, as if they were angry with their lives, and took it ill that God hath given them a being in the world, what can a man think but that they are distracted and out of their wits? But it were well if their madness were invincible, and that they could not help it; but now have they both seen and known, and

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might prevent their danger and will not; therefore their sin remains.

But I will not stand upon the long and healthy life, which the Remembrance of God or a holy Fear of his name procures in this life. I will carry this motive farther, as this long Life relates to everlasting and endless life. Behold Christians, this prize, this mighty Commodity we set before you in his Name who hath sent us to be Embassadors for *Christ Jesus*. Men, Fathers, and Brethren, and ye that fear God, give audience: The God of our Fathers, the God of *Abraham*, and the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, hath raised his Son Jesus from the dead, who hath brought life and immortality to light. This immortal Life he offers you, and by us entreats you to accept of it.

He

He doth promise you, that you shall live eternally in his Bosom, in the Sunshine of his Favour, in the Beams of his inaccessible Light. He doth promise you, that you shall live eternally without Fear, without Want, without Poverty, without Trouble, without Sickness, without Care, and without Anxiety. He doth promise you, that you shall live eternally in all the Ease, and Plenty, and Prosperity that reason can desire. He doth promise you all this, not that he stands in need of you, or is in distress for your company, or that this eternal Life lies like a Drug upon his hands, or that he knows not what to do with it. No, but his Almighty, Immense, and infinite love moves him to offer all this; and by way of exchange, he requires not an Oblation of the Beasts of the field, or of a thou-

land Rivers of Oyl ; but all he expects at your hands , is this early Remembrance of your Creator ; a Remembrance without which you cannot live happy here, without which you can never relish that eternal Life he doth promise you, without which you are incapable of conversing with him , and without which it is impossible you should ever be his Friends and Favourites. And have you no ambition to live as long as Angels live ? Are you so low-spirited that you have no desire to live eternally ? Ye young people , ye are loth to die, behold, this conscientious Remembrance of your God will make your days like the days of God, whose Years do not fail, and who endures from one Generation to another. Ye that are stricken in age, as old as ye are, ye are unwilling to die. If you  
are

are loth to die, behold here is a Tree of Life, if you stretch forth your hand and eat of this Tree, you shall live for ever. This Remembrance of God, this Fear of his Name, is the true Antidote against Death, aye, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against you. And will ye refuse so great a Mercy, and a Pearl of that inestimable value? Did any of the damned see you loth and unwilling to embrace this offer, what strange Creatures would they take you to be? *O then, see that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not that refused him who spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaks from Heaven, Heb. 12.*

21.

*Sixthly.* It is rational to believe, that if God were always in our

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thoughts,

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thoughts, we should not dare to sin. We put him out of our minds, are loth to reflect on him, loth to think of him; or if he thrust himself into our Understandings, we force him out again, and that's the reason why we venture to offend him. God hath done all that was fit for a wise Creator to do, to make us always remember, and always think of him: His Impress and Stamp is upon every visible and created Object. We see him in Heaven and in Earth. How can we look upon the Sun, and not behold him by whose order he shines, and warms this Nether-world? How can we view the Moon and Stars, and not see him that calls them all by their names? He is to be seen in every Flower, in every Tree, in every sprig of Herb, in every Shrub, in our Souls and Bodies; and whatever we touch

touch or handle, we may see him in whom, and for whom, and through whom are all things; and then surely here are great opportunities to think of him, to have him in our minds, and to keep him in our thoughts, and with that remembrance to banish all things that are contrary or offensive to his Nature! But so stupid are the generality, that though God as it were thrusts himself upon them, and hath made the way to forget him in a manner unpassable, yet they look not upon him, see him not, pierce and dive no farther than the Shell or outward Rind, think only on the Effect, and dis-regard the Cause, fix their eyes on what is before them, but mind not him that is invisible. They can do it, but they will not, they have reason given them to take notice of him, but they use

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it not. And while God is not in all their thoughts, how should they fear, how should they stand in awe, how should they be restrained from doing ill? Not thinking of him, they dread him not. Taking no notice of his Majesty, and Greatness, and Power, and Goodness, they pay him not that respect which is due to that everlasting Being. Banishing him out of their minds, they reflect not on his Laws, do not mind his threatnings, and remember not what the consequences of this neglect will be, which makes them rush into sin, as a Horse rushes into the Battle. This is to have eyes, and not to see; which as it is at first a mans sin, so it becomes afterwards his punishment, as *Pharaoh's* induration was first his crime, but came to be seal'd upon him afterward by a Decree from Heaven.



ven. What a Philosophical, or rather Angelical life might we lead if we would taste and see in every thing, how sweet and how gracious the Lord is! This would not onely fright us from breaking his holy and wholesome Laws, but become a Treasury, a Repository of admirable Comforts. This would qualifie every affliction, give an allay to our sorrows, mitigate every trouble, support us in distress, relieve us in our wants, and direct us in perplexities. This would make us submit to the divine Will in all things, and say with him, *I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*, Psal. 39. 9. This is to converse with God, and never to want company. This way solitude may be improved, and he that where-ever he is, beholds the divine Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, which

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he may see in every Animal, in his Meat, and Drink, and Clothing, but chiefly in his Reason, can never be in distress for want of Company. For God is always with him, and by seeing him in the various Objects before him, and admiring his powerful Arm, and the excellent designs he hath in these Dispensations, he doth as it were speak to him, address himself to him, and gets assurance that God is pleased with him: *For who so is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindnesses of the Lord, Psal. 107. ult.*

*Seventhly*, Remember Now thy Creator. Sinner, it must be now or never. Thou hast no time but the present time. What is past and what is to come is out of thy power. This is all the stock thou  
hast :

hast: If thou neglect this, thou art not sure thou shalt have any more. *Now*, when thou readest these things; *Now*, when thou hearest these truths; *Now*, when these admonitions are suggested to thy mind; *Now*, when the voice of God sounds in thine ears; *Now* is the time to give earnest heed unto the message of Grace and Mercy. *Now* thy Memory serves, *now* thy Reason is strong, *now* every thing invites thee to close with thy God, dare to do it. *Now* is God ready to seal thy Pardon. *Now* he is willing to give thee an Interest in his love. *Now* he calls, *now* he entreats, *now* thy Conscience checks thee; *Now* thou hast good inclinations, *now* thou may'st make thy self, *now* thou may'st be advanced to heavenly places. *Now* work, *now* labour, *now* resist, *now* fight, *now* strive, *now* contend, *now* bestir thy

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thy self, *now* rise; *now* take pains,  
*now* secure Gods loving kindness,  
 and thy happiness.

After this life there is no Purgatory, no middle state, where the Prayers of the living, or Masses said by Priests can atone for your past or former Errours. They that can feed themselves with such Popish Dreams, or have any opinion of these fancies of Nuns and Friars, must be wofully forsaken of God and of their Reason. Neither St. *Francis's* Girdle, nor St. *Simon* Stocks, his *Scapulary*, nor the *Rosary* of St. *Dominick*, nor all the *Trinkets* and *Rellicks* the *Roman* Church doth boast of, will do ye any service here. To hope for such helps, contrary to Scripture, and ridiculous in the eyes of rational men, is an argument of a distempered Brain, and unaccountable stupidity. Thou confessest  
 the

the Scripture to be the Word of God, and to contain the perfect Will of God; and if so, God having revealed not one syllable of his intent of being entreated by the Prayers of the living, or thine own after thy departure, why should'st thou feed thy self with Wind and Air, or believe that when thy *Now* hath been neglected, thy *Hereafter* will save all. This is to play with Religion, not to believe it, if now thou remembrest not the great work thou hast to do, thou onely *art*, but *livest* not. Thou hast onely a Being in the world, but art a useless thing. Thou *livest* not, except thou livest in a sense of the future account, and securest Gods favour, and the safety of thy Soul, by departing from the way that leads to destruction. And if the *Roman* in *Dio* thought no years *part* of his life, but

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but those he had spent in retirement, and conversing with God and himself, and therefore caused it to be engraven on his Tombstone; *Here lies Similius, who hath been Seventy six years in the world, but lived but Seven*, what must be written on thy Monument who regardest not the example of *Jesus*, nor the lives of *Saints*, nor the *Precepts* of the Gospel, now in this *thy day*? What must be written I say, on thy Monument, but that thou hast lived *pondus utile terra*; That thou hast been a dead weight in the world, and hast not lived one day to the comfort and welfare of thy immortal Soul? This present time is the time that God prescribes thee to watch against sin, to resist temptation, to get the ornament of Grace and Vertue. If thou fanciest any other time may do better, thou reckon-

reckonest without thy Host, buildest Castles in the Air, and only deceivest thy self with pleasant Illusions. Who should know it so well what time is fittest for this work as the all-wise God? Shall thy shallow brain pretend to know better than he who made thy frame, or considers and ponders things in the Ballance of his eternal Wisdom? Canst thou imagine that a God bent so much upon thy good, would prescribe any thing prejudicial to thy interest? Doth he affirm, and protest, that the present time is the best and only time, and darest thou contradict him, or act as if he were mistaken, and thy choice were best? What insolence, what rudeness is this? and if it were no sin, can any thing be more contrary to good manners? What time would'st thou set apart for this necessary work? What!

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What! the age of infirmity, of sickness, or of dotage? Go and offer it to thy Governour, and see whether he will accept of such weakendeavours? Nay, art thou so fond of weak services, that thou wouldest expect none from thy Servant but when his strength fails him? Wilt thou give that to God, which Man would scorn, and thy self do'st not care for? Hath thy God deserved so little at thy hand, that thou canst serve him so? Is this the return thou makest him for the thousand Mercies he bestows upon thee? Doth he take care of thy Soul and Body with all his strength, and shall such a crawling Worm refuse to offer him that which is sound and whole? Hath he given his Son for thy ransome, broke down the Gates of Hell to free such a slave as thou art from the Prison, and shalt



shalt thou think much of remembering him with all thy heart? Wilt thou make Bargains with him, as *Pharaoh* did with the Children of *Israel*, and limit him how much he shall take at thy hands? Canst thou think so and be fearless of his anger! is Vengeance asleep, or is his Justice, do'st thou think, sunk into a fatal slumber? Can God see thee thus refractory, and forbear preparing his Arrows upon the Bow against thee? Need he court his Servant to do his work, who hath Flames enough to force him to it? Wilt thou deal so basely with him who hath acted so generously for thy good? What mighty purchase doth he get by thy remembering of him? Is it any advantage to him when thou workest in his Vineyard? Is it not thy profit he seeks? and shall he after all be scorned and undervalued

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valued for his pains? Hast thou any spark of Reason left, and dost not thou blush at these doings?

What vanity, or what frenzy rather hath possessed thy mind, that thou talkest of being serious hereafter? Mightest not thou as well say, that thou wilt forbear wholesom Food some years, and eat and drink hereafter? If thou wouldest not cheat thy Body in this manner, what hurt hath thy Soul done thee that thou wilt wrong it thus? Must thy Body feed, and thy Soul be starved? Hath not that need of nourishment, as well as thy corruptible Flesh? Or dost thou think that thy Soul will be contented with the trash thou feedest thy Body with? Thy Soul stands in need of the love of God, as much as thy Body doth of meat and drink;  
That's

That's her food as much as Bread is of the ignobler part? If she wants this she dies, and falls a Prey to Wolves, to ravenous Birds, even to hellish Furies. And shall so noble a Creature be undone for want of a little care?

Sinner! Do'st thou know what Salvation means? Is being happy for ever nothing? Is it so light a thing that thou needest deliberate, whether thou shalt prepare for it? When the Saints of old have left Father and Mother, and Lands and Houses, and lost Life itself for it, dost thou stand musing whether thou shalt accept of it upon the conditions of the Gospel? Art thou afraid of remembering thy Creator, when everlasting Treasures depend upon the choice? Do'st thou believe Salvation is the confluence of all Felicity, and dost thou dread an  
early

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early consideration how thou shalt arrive to it? Is it the greatest Mercy that ever was offered to Mankind, and dost not thou think it worth accepting upon any terms? Was it purchased by the Bloud of God, and shalt thou think any thing too dear for it? It is that which Angels wonder at, that God should condescend to take a handful of dust and ashes into his bosom, and dost not thou think it worth while to enquire what thou shalt do to be saved? Salvation! which to get, and to attain to, *St. Paul* runs through Fire and Water, through Honour and Dishonour, through a good Report and an evil Report, and counteth all things dross and dung in comparison of it, dost thou prefer dross and dung and a sinful careless life before it?

What a contempt dost thou put  
upon

upon God in valuing that so little which he prizes at the highest rate? Do'st thou contemn God, and hope to escape? Do'st thou make nothing of his Promises, and Threatnings, and think to go unpunished? If thou allowest God to be a greater Prince than thy King, will he sit silent dost thou think while thou tramplest his Authority under thy feet? A temporal Prince will not suffer himself to be baffled thus, and canst thou imagine that a jealous God will connive at it? It's true, God is merciful, but art thou a fit Object of Mercy, that despisest the riches of his goodness? Will he have mercy on a sinner, that had rather wallow in mire and dirt, than be washed, and justified, and sanctified in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God? Why should he  
shew

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shew mercy to a person that thinks  
 his mercy a buthen, and his kind-  
 ness troublesome? It is Mercy  
 that calls thee to remember thy  
 Creator now. It's Mercy that  
 would save thee from perishing in  
 the Deluge with ungodly men.  
 It's Mercy that would draw thee  
 away from thy Vanities, from thy  
 admiration of the world, and  
 from sinful compliances. It's Mer-  
 cy that invites thee now to chuse  
 the better Part, and to lay up thy  
 Treasure in Heaven. If this Mer-  
 cy be counted a drug, and instead  
 of being priz'd, look'd upon as a  
 thing needless, and impertinent,  
 how shall Mercy plead for thee  
 in the last day? Or what apolo-  
 gies can Mercy make for a person  
 that had rather have the wrath  
 of God than that *Mercy* for his  
 portion? How must this please  
 the enemy of mankind, to see a  
 Crea-

Creature whom God would love, run away from him, and instead of remembering his Creator, forget him and his Laws, which are his Cordials and Restoratives? God surely cannot be pleased with it. He protests against thy refusal. He complains of it, he sees the wrong thou dost to thy Soul, and seems even at a loss for a reason why thou wilt do so. He that puts thee upon the neglect of this early and serious remembrance of thy God and Creator, he it is that rejoices at it: His Agents thy evil Companions, may rejoice at it; men as senseless as thy self may rejoice at it, but Angels mourn, and all good men grieve to see thee so obstinate. The Devil onely takes delight in it: It doth him good to think that the number of his Infernal Companions will be encreased by thy company.

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pany. He lays Snares for thy Soul, and is glad when thou art taken. His envy is gratified to see thee averse from this early Fear of God. He was afraid thou wouldest chuse the Wisdom which is from above; and to see thee chuse that which is earthly and sensual, that's it, which is some ease to him in his torments.

Why? wilt thou be worse than other Creatures? All other Creatures betimes prosecute the end for which they are created, and wilt thou alone forget the end for which thou camest into the world? The end for which thou wert created was to seek the things which are above, and wilt thou directly contrary to that design, and in that age too, which is most proper to do it in, like a Beast seek the things which are below? Sure thou must take God to be some strangely



strangely tame and easie Deity, that can see thee cross his Designs, reverse his Intentions, and walk opposite to the scope of all his wonderful Works, and set thy self against his Purposes in thy Creation, and sit down quietly under these abuses.

Thou believest some persons in the world, why shouldest not thou believe good men, who have tried this early remembrance of God, found the greatest comfort, and the strongest support in it, and can testify by experience, that nothing is so beneficial, so pleasant, or so useful, as an early self-denial; such men are too honest to deceive thee, they dread lying, as thou dost the severities of Religion; and they would not for a world assert and affirm these things, but that they know these ways to be ways of pleasantness, and these Paths end

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in peace. Indeed that's the happy *Exit* of these ways, and when so many thousand wise men have said, and do say so; *O Remember them which have spoken to you in the Name of the Lord, whose faith follow, knowing the end of their conversation.*

Eighthly, *Our Remembring our Creator here is the way to have God remember us hereafter.* It is not with him as with *Pharaoh's* Butler, who being lifted up to his former place, forgot what *Joseph* had done for him. His turn was serv'd, and the others kindness signified nothing to him now. God remembers what hath been done here for his Honour and Glory, and this Remembrance he will at last express in rewards suitable to his Greatness and Majesty. *Darius*, before he sat on the Throne of his Ancestors, had

had received a Garment, as a Present from *Sylofon*. He remembered it when he was King, and made him Governour of *Samus*. Thus God will remember our remembrance of him here. Not that we ascribe gratitude to God, which would suppose him indebted to man, a thing impossible; For *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* Rom. 11. 35. but his remembrance of our Services is gratuitous. He remembers them, not because they deserve it, but because he will, not that they merit it, but that he is pleased to do so. It is not their worth, but his goodness; not their intrinsic value, but his abundant Mercy that moves him to this remembrance. The last day, the great day of Judgement, is that day of remembrance, and even a cup of cold water given to a Disci-

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*ple in the name of a Disciple, shall be remembered then, Matth. 10. 42.*

*Rejoyce Christians, for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shew'd toward his Name, in that ye have ministred to the Saints, and do minister, Heb. 6. 10. Your Tears,*

*your Prayers, your Alms, your Feeding the Hungry, your Clo-*

*thing the Naked, your Visiting the Sick, your going to Prisoners, will all be remembered one day, not*

*one of these works shall be forgotten. God sets them down in his Book, and they shall be proclaim-*

*ed in the last day. The Chronicles shall be open'd, and the faithful*

*Mordecai shall be remembered; though for many years his good*

*works have lain dormant, yet at last they shall be brought forth as the light, and his Righteousness as the noon day. There is nothing*

*that*

that Christ seems to remember in the last day more effectually than our bounty to the poor and needy, and the way and manner of his remembering it, is lofty and great.

*Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, Matth.*

25. 34. He remembers our Charity *here*, if it be great and signal, and from a cheerful heart, *For the liberal Soul shall be made fat, and he that scatters in a charitable way, increases*; and of this, experience is a sufficient witness; so that it may well be said, that Alms-giving is the gainfullest art, and the right course to thrive. But after death God remembers it more solemnly.

I shall not lay any great stress here upon the Examples of *Stephen King of Hungary*, and *Oswald* sometime King of *England*, of whom it is reported, that their Right

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hands after their death never putrified ; but while the rest of their Bodies mouldred into dust, this part was preserved sound and entire , because in their life-time they had made much use of their Right hand in bestowing their Goods on the indigent. These may be reckoned among Gods miraculous Providences , which though they appear but seldom, yet may serve to confirm our Faith, of Gods remembering hereafter what we do here for the household of Faith. Of this nature is the famous story of *Enagrius* , recorded by credible Witnesses. This Heathen *Philosopher*, being a great acquaintance of *Synesius* Bishop of *Cyrene*, the Bishop frequently argued with him about the truth of the Christian Religion, and was often at him to receive Baptism, but all in vain.

One

One day the Bishop being very earnest with him to use no further delays or excuses, the *Philosopher* told him, there were several things in the Christian Religion which his reason could never digest, and among the rest these two, That men shall rise at last with the same Bodies that they carried about them here on earth; And that what a man gives to the poor here, God will repay it him in the other world. The Bishop told him that all this was very true, and that they had all the reason in the world to believe it; insomuch, that what with the Bishops confidence, and what with the Arguments he used, the *Philosopher* at last was perswaded to be baptized; and though he wavered much in his belief, yet the Bishop thought it convenient to wash him with Water in the Name of the Lord Je-

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sius, not doubting but in a little time he would come to a full assurance of Faith. Some weeks being past, the *Philosopher* comes to *Synefius* and deposites three hundred pounds in his hand, ordering him to distribute it to the poor; yet with this *Proviso*, that *Synefius* should give him a Bill under his hand, that *Christ* should repay it him in the other world. The Bishop cheerfully writ him a Bill, and subscribed it, and *Euagrius* goes home. Not long after the *Philosopher* falls sick, and finding death approaching, calls his two Sons to him, charging them to put the Bill *Synefius* had given him betwixt his fingers, and so bury him, which was done accordingly. Three days after his death a Ghost in *Euagrius's* shape appears to *Synefius* by night, bids him not be afraid, but gives him thanks, assuring



ring him, that the Bill was abundantly paid, orders him to go to his Grave, and in the Coffin he should find his Receipt subscribed with his own hand. *Synesius* astonished at the sight, and more at the Spirits words, immediately repairs to the *Philosophers* Sons, asks them what they had done to their Father? They replied, that they had performed his will, and according to his order put a Bill he named to them betwixt his fingers. The Bishop desirous to know the utmost of it, causes the Grave and Coffin to be opened, and there finds the *Philosophers* acknowledgment of having received what *Synesius* had promised him, and his name *Euagrius* written under it. The Spectators wondring at the mighty Providence, run presently to Church, and sing a *Kirieleison* or *Lord have mercy upon us.*

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Though this passage may be of some use; yet we have a surer word of Prophecy to establish our belief of Gods remembring our acts of Charity in the life to come. He that is the Truth, and the Life, hath given us so many promises of it, that there is no room left to doubt of it.

Nor is it onely our Alms that God will remember in the next life, but all the good we have done: Our Repentance, our turning from our evil ways, our contempt of the world, our contemplations of the future Inheritance, our love to God, our Prayers and Praises, our Obedience, our watchfulness over our Hearts, our endeavours to convert and comfort our Neighbour, the Admonitions and Exhortations we gave them, the Mortifications we used, the pains we took to subdue our Lusts, our attempts  
to

to follow the best Examples, our self-denials, our Temperance, our Meekness, our Humility, our Sighs and Groans under the burthen of our sins, our hunger and thirst after Righteousness, our peaceableness, our sufferings for Righteousness sake, our doing his Will, our self-resignation, our affection to his Ordinances, our delight in the House of God, our relish of his Word, our frequent use of the holy Communion, and our readiness to every good word and work. There is a Register kept in Heaven of all these performances: Men may forget them, and our Neighbours may take no notice of them when we are dead and gone, but God doth not forget them. He takes notice of them here, and he'll take notice of them hereafter. He'll remember them, to crown them, to reward them, to glorifie them. In

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In the Parable of *Barlaam* and *Josaphat* there is mention made of a Country, where every year the people chuse a new King, and whoever is chosen reigns for a year, and after that is banished into some howling Defart, or barren Island where he perishes with hunger. A silly fellow being chosen one year, surprized with the sudden alteration of his fortune, gave himself over to all manner of debaucheries, and spared no cost, no pains to satiate his lustful desires and brutish appetite; the present plenty made him forget the years of sorrow, that were to ensue, and when his year expired, he was sent according to custom to the unfortunate Island, where he spent and ended his days most miserably. Another year a wiser man than ordinary being elected by the multitude,

*Damasc. Hist.*  
*Barl. & Jos.*

tude, he began to use his Royalty with great moderation, and the thoughts of the dismal years that were to come, made him reflect how he should live when all the present pomp and grandeur should vanish. Having therefore a Counsellor of great prudence about him, and demanding of him what he should do to make his future solitary life easie to him, he received this advice, To engross what treasures he could during his splendid Fortune, and send it away by trusty Officers to the place he was to be in till he died. He did so, and when he was forced to quit all his magnificence, and commanded away into a desolate Country, his Exile proved his happiness, and he lived in great content to his dying day.

He that remembers his kind Creator here, sends his goods away  
before

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before him into another world, makes provision for his Soul, when it enters into Lands unknown and invisible, and by the Carriages that arrive there, the man is known and remembred by God & his holy Angels. His good works mount up to Heaven before him. These keep him from starving when he quits his accommodations here. These are the food he lives on when he leaves this world; not that their natural strength and vertue is so great, as to give him eternal Life, but being perfumed with the merits of the Son of God, they are remembred by God with Praises and Commendations, and made everlasting food.

*Ninthly*, Notwithstanding all these encouragements, we cannot but with grief behold how little God is remembred by young and old;

old ; and though he be in the midst of us, and by his Providence upholds and supports us every moment, how wretchedly he is forgotten by most men. It's true, he is not so forgotten that his Name is never so much as mentioned ; some will do that if it were onely in their Oaths and Imprecations. But how few will or have courage to remember him in their actions, and think ; *This God hath forbid, and I must not do it ; this is against his Law, and I must not venture upon it ; this clashes with his Word, and I must avoid it ; this will displease his purer eyes, and I must abhor it ; or this is acceptable to him, and I will embrace it ; this is to act like the Children of God, and I will follow them ; this my great Master hath expressly commanded, and I will obey.* All other remembrances without this  
are

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are Complements, not Devotions. This Remembrance God values more than a thousand formal Devotions, repeated as Papists do their *Ave's*. This is to remember him rationally, like persons who understand the right use and end of their reason. He that doth not so, forgets him; and whatever his pretences may be of remembering him, God looks upon it as oblivion while in his conversation abroad, and at home his greatness and holiness is not thought of; and those that forget him thus, cannot expect God should remember them in the day of Recompense as a Father doth his Children. Great will be the terrour, when the thoughtless Soul comes to appear before an all-seeing God, and greater yet, when to such forgetful sinners he shall say, *I know you not*; for so we are told *Matth. 7. 23. Then will I profess*  
unto



unto them, *I never knew you: Depart from me ye that work iniquity.* How! *I never knew you?* How can any thing be hid from him, when it is expressly said, *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts 15. 18. True, he knows them as his works, but not as his Friends. He knows them as Traitors, but not as faithful Subjects. He knows them as Creatures, but not as his Children. He knows them as Prodigals, but not as Heirs of Heaven. He knows them as Strangers, but not as Domesticks. How should he know them when they have lost the Character of his Sheep, the mark whereby the Flock must be distinguished, which is to hear his Voice? And what a dismal condition must that man be in, whom God will take no notice of, and whom he doth not remember, that ever he  
was

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was of his Family ! If God knows him not, no Angel in Heaven will know him, no Saint, no Spirit made perfect will know him. He is shut out from Heaven, excluded from the best and noblest Company ; no Society will receive him, but that of hellish Spirits. You may laugh at these Terrours now, but when they come to pass, what wise man would be under your circumstances ? As a Father plagued with a disobedient Son, forgets that ever he had such a Child, so God will forget that ever you had any relation to him. He will remember your sins indeed , he'll remember how you have fought against him , how you have doted upon the world, how you have pleased your Flesh , and counted his Laws as strange things , how you have slighted his thunders, and looked upon his offers of Mercy

as

as words in course ; How you have enslaved your Souls to your Lusts, and made the Mistress wait upon a pitiful *Hagar* ; how you have gone on in sin when your hearts have smitten you for it, and thought your jolly life would never be at an end ; how you have loved unrighteousness more than goodness , and turned the truth of God into a lie ; how you have thought the duties of Religion below you , and put off God with the lame and with the blind for sacrifice ; how soon you have been weary of serving him, and how you have looked upon your duties, as things needless and unprofitable, how you have had mens persons in admiration because of advantage , and hearkned more to the persuasions of a Sot , than to his wholesome Counsels ; how dear your credit and honour hath been  
to

## 116 *The First Fruits*

to you, and how you have valued it above his honour and glory ; how you have derided him that hath reprov'd you in the Gate, and been wise to do evil ; how you have made the riches of the world the great end of all your endeavours, and set your affections upon things perishable and inconstant.

This he'll remember with a witness, and none of all the hard Speeches you have vented against him , or the power of godliness shall be forgotten : But this Remembrance will be your misery, and his thinking on your faults and wilful errours , your condemnation. Flatter not your selves, that once you did remember his Will, and Laws, and Mercies with great sincerity, though afterward tempted by the Devil, and enticed by the frailty of your Flesh, you depar-

departed from the holy Commandment delivered to you; for he hath made already a *Proviso* against that Plea, and protested, that if *the righteous man turn away from his righteousness and commit iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die,* Ezek. 18. 24. He'll forget all your little Services, and your petty hypocritical Devotions; indeed they are not worth remembring, fitter to be scorned than to be remembered. To remember them so, as to crown them with bliss, is a thing they are not capable of, for Love, the great principle and sap that must feed them, is wanting.

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## 118 *The First Fruits*

Suppose you were in danger of losing all you have, even life itself, and stood in need of some great Princes assistance who had formerly expressed more than ordinary kindness to you, and should he upon your address turn away his face from you, not onely make himself strange to you, as *Joseph* did to his Brethren by way of tryal, but be really so, what a fright and confusion would you be in? Behold God is that puissant Prince, who hath formerly courted you by Kindnesses, and Mercies, and Entreaties. If you forget him in your Conversation here, you will certainly be in danger of losing, not onely all your Goods, but eternal Life to boot. Before this powerful Prince, who alone can save you from perishing, you must stand e'er long, his help and assistance will be more needful and  
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advantageous to you than all the Advocates that Heaven and Earth can afford. And if this immortal King, instead of remembering you, shall frown upon you, be strange to you, acknowledge no such forgetful Creatures for Members of his Family, or Objects of his paternal care and tenderness: Can any Language express the astonishment your Souls will be in? when he shall put you in mind of all the sins you have forgotten, and of all the secret Follies you kept concealed from the world and the eyes of men, when he shall remember, and lay open all that you have buried in oblivion, and make the wounds you gave to your Souls, and skin'd them over, bleed afresh, how dumb, how pale, how surpriz'd will ye be at the tremendous Charge! *O consider this ye that forget God, lest I*  
*tear*

## 120    *The First Fruits*

*tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver, Psal. 50. 22.*

But after all, methinks this Discourse is incompleat, except I add something concerning our Deceased Brother, whose death hath brought us hither. Though I had no personal acquaintance with him, yet I have some reason to believe that the account given me of him is impartial, and agreeable to truth. He was, it seems, a person faithful in his Generation, a man of Conscience, a pious Christian, a good Church-man, a loving Brother, and an excellent Servant. Onely of his Death it may be said as *David* said of a far greater man: *Did the Lad die as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters, but as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou.* In a word,  
Mur-



Murthered he was, by men brutish and barbarous ; and who, like the Judge in the Gospel , neither feared God, nor regarded man. I will not be too inquisitive into the reasons of this Providence, though it be natural enough when such accidents befall good men, to wonder at the strangeness of the Dispensation. But when we see a *good Prophet* killed by a Lion for a meer mistake , as it appears to us ; and *Josiah* an excellent Prince, slain in battle for a rash act ; and an *Uzzah* struck dead upon the spot for stretching forth his hand to uphold the tottering Ark , all admirable men , and whose Salvation we do not question, we need not wonder that Providence hath permitted a Murther to be committed upon this innocent person ; for as in the aforesaid examples, their violent death was onely a

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temporal affliction, such as sicknesses and other Diseases are, so the accident in our deceased Friend was of the same nature, and such calamities in good men do but help and advance them the sooner to their everlasting harbour. And yet I cannot altogether excuse our Brother here departed. For as the Murther was acted in a publick Fair, where great disorders, rudenesses, and insolencies are committed, and excesses, and vain Shews are all the entertainment, so it's probable, and I fear, that when he went to this place, he ventured into one which he had no lawful call to be at. The Primitive Bishops and Christians were very much against such vain and foolish Shews, and forbid their Disciples to frequent them; and as *Proph* felt by going into the High Priests Hall, so it might be very just with God

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to let so sad a Providence befall our deceased Friend, to give warning to other good men to keep ever in Gods ways, that they may be confident of the Angels bearing them up in their hands, lest they dash their foot against a stone. But though there might be inadvertency, and infirmity, in our deceased Brothers going to a place he had nothing to do at ; to be sure it was onely a single act, not a habit of juvenile vanity ; and though he was thereby deprived of the farther comforts of this Life, yet that can be no impediment to his enjoyment of a better ; for God judges of us not by an accidental incogitancy, but by the stream and current of our lives. His mortal wounds, though procured and caused by very bad instruments, yet did not put him into a rage and passion, but he freely forgave his

## 124 *The First Fruits*

Murtherers, and like St. *Steven* pray'd that God would not lay this sin to their charge, and when he had said so he fell asleep. His death is a Sermon to us all; and though he be dead, yet he calls to us in *Christ's* language, *Watch therefore, for ye know not when your Lord comes, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cock crowing. And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch.*

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# THE PRAYER.

**G**reat, Glorious, and Incomprehensible God! with thee is terrible Majesty; touching thy Essence, we cannot find it out; thou art excellent in Power, in Judgement, and in plenty of Justice. Thy ways are always equal, and the most piercing, as well as envious eye can spy no fault in thy proceedings. Thou art infinitely pure and holy, and the Light, thou art deckt withal, admits no spots, no variableness, no shadow of turning; Thou art the most worthy Object for my thoughts and memory to fix upon. Thou de-  
G 3 serveest

## 126      The First Fruits

*servest to be remembred in all the  
 actions of my life. And to forget  
 thee, without whom I cannot breathe  
 is an Indignity, I cannot answer, I  
 have too long pass'd by thee as if I  
 had no relation to thee. I have  
 been able to remember a frivolous  
 story of my Neighbour, and my me-  
 mory hath serv'd me well enough, to  
 preserve a wrong or injury done to  
 my Name and Person; but thy lo-  
 ving kindnesses and gracious Provi-  
 dences, and what ever concerns my  
 everlasting welfare, I have suffered  
 to slip out of my mind. How many  
 years have I spent in the world with-  
 out any serious thoughts of the great  
 mystery of Godliness? Thou hast gi-  
 ven me Line upon Line, and Pre-  
 cept upon Precept, and how like wa-  
 ter have I suffer'd them to be spilt  
 on the ground! I have looked upon  
 my remembring thee as a thing in-  
 different, which I might observe or  
 neglect*

neglect at my pleasure ? I have lived thou knowest , as if the world had been the onely object of my hopes and desires ! my best and golden days , how have I squandred them away as if they were things too precious to be consecrated to thy service ! How vain hath my mind been ! How hath it ranged and roved , and fluttered up and down among the contents and comforts of this present life ! How greedily hath it applied it self to these fading Flowers , and thought , that here lay all the sweetness I could hope for ! How late do I begin to love thee ! How late do I begin to be wise ! Had I improved the Talents thou hast given me betimes , as soon as I was capable to understand what Religion and an everlasting interest meant , what good might I have done ! How many might I have drawn by my example to thy pleasant ways !

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How great a portion of thy love and favour have I lost ! and how much earlier might I have enjoyed the influences of thy Charity ! How justly mightest thou have doomed me to a reprobate mind, or struck me dead in my vanities ! I remember Lord, how thou hast called, and I have refused ; how thou hast stretched forth thy hands unto me, and I have not regarded ! How justly mightest thou laugh now at my calamity, and mock when my fear comes ; when my fear comes as desolation, and my destruction like a Whirlwind ! But O my God, in the midst of thine anger remember Mercy ! Remember O Lord, thy tender Mercies, and thy loving Kindnesses, for they have been ever of old ! Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my Transgressions ; according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness sake ; O Lord ! Good and upright  
is



is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way. O my God! I am dull, I am ignorant, I have stood in the way of sinners. O teach thou me, teach me to remember thee at my lying down, and mine uprising. Teach me to remember thee in my going out, and in my coming in! Let thy remembrance for the future be very sweet to me, and let me never think of thee but with pleasure and delight. Let me forget what is behind me, and put me always in mind of the recompense that is before me. Call not my sins to remembrance; and as for my transgressions, forget them, and cast them behind thy back. Teach me to remember what thou hast done for me, and make that remembrance powerful to engage me to gratitude and obedience. In death there is no remembrance of thee, and who will give thee thanks in the Grave? The living,

## 130 The First Fruits

ving, the living, they shall praise thee. O let my life be a continual remembrance of thee. Morning, Evening, and at Noon, let me remember thee; and in the Night let my song be of thee, who art the God of my Salvation. Let me remember thy love, and how thou hast humbled thy self for my sake. I am apt to forget thee, O refresh thou my memory with a sense of thy goodness; and when the world would drive any serious thoughts out of my mind, keep them in, O Lord, by thy mighty power, and make them agreeable to my Memory and Understanding. Remember how frail I am, and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Forget me not, O my God, though I have forgotten thee. Deal not with me according to mine iniquities, neither reward me according to my transgressions. Remember thy promise un-  
to

to the penitent, and how graciously thou hast offered Pardon and Salvation to those that turn from their evil ways. O God, it is the desire of my Soul, and the real purpose of my Heart, to turn to thee, to seek thy face, to walk in thy ways, and to bid farewell to all the sinful Pleasures of this life. Put me in mind of all the Motives, and Arguments thou hast given me to make my Calling and Election sure. When they wear out in my Mind, write them there afresh, and renew them still, that being ever before me, they may lead me to thy holy Hill: O bring to my remembrance every Precept and every Duty I am to perform, and when ever I am to perform any, say unto me, call to me, This is the way, walk in it, and turn neither to the right nor to the left, then shall I praise thee  
with

## 132      *The First Fruits*

*with joyful Lips, and give thanks  
at the remembrance of thy Holiness,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with thee and the Holy  
Ghost, be all honour and glory, for  
ever and ever. Amen.*

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**FINIS.**

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